

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Operator of Clifford's Restaurant charged with felony tax theft, operating a business after license revoked**

**SEATTLE**, Wash., May 9, 2002 — The state today charged the operator of Clifford's Restaurant in Kenmore with felony counts of stealing sales tax and operating a business after his license had been revoked.

The Criminal Justice Division of the Washington State Attorney General's Office filed the charges in King County Superior Court against Kwong Yee (Jonathan) Tam, 55, of Issaquah. The charges carry maximum penalties of 10 years in jail and a \$20,000 fine.

The charges were brought on behalf of the Washington State Department of Revenue, which assisted in the investigation of the popular restaurant located on Bothell Way along Lake Washington.

According to the charging papers, the Department of Revenue revoked Tam's business license on Oct. 30, 2001 after he had failed to file tax returns, reneged on agreements to pay nearly \$40,000 in back taxes and penalties, and repeatedly failed to appear at meetings to resolve the issue.

Revocation notices were posted at the restaurant twice, but Tam allegedly tore down the notices and continued to operate, telling his employees that he "couldn't be shut down" and the Department of Revenue "couldn't touch me." Concerned employees had Tam sign a statement assuring them that he had resolved his issue with the state, and they could work there without getting into trouble.

Investigators determined that Tam continued to operate the business daily and collect nearly \$7,200 in sales tax without remitting it to the state as required by law.

Clifford's has been closed since agents executed a search warrant on April 4.

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